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"A More Excellent Way"

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✠ ALBAN GOODIER, S.J.
ARCHBISHOP OF HIERAPOLIS

LONDON
BURNS OATES & WASHBOURNE LTD.
PUBLISHERS TO THE HOLY SEE

"A MORE EXCELLENT WAY"

BY

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Dr. G. F. D.

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A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

I

IT is important for us to bear always in mind that we learn Our Lord as He was, and therefore as He is, wholly from the Gospels. Other Lives of Him, other writings, books of meditation and the like, may help us to interpret Him; they may give us the fruit of the discoveries of others; but in the end even the most inspired and the most living of these must be referred back to the Gospels; if their picture differs from that given by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, then, however beautiful and fascinating and elevating it may be, it is not Jesus Christ, but some fine fancy of an artist's imagination. On this account, whatever else one may read and study—Lives of Christ, works on the spiritual life, mystical books, the letters and other writings of saints, great biographies, inspiriting histories, records of martyrs, subtlest theology, annals of the Church, poetry the most sublime—all, it may be, written to

enlarge and deepen our concept of Our Lord —still one can never lay aside the constant reading of the Gospel; the constant following of Him through their pages who alone, and in them alone, is set before us infallibly as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

And, in fact, in them we have enough; not, it is true, enough to satisfy our human curiosity, for we are keen, almost beyond endurance, to know everything that can be known, even to the most trivial detail, about this "most beautiful among the sons of men"; but enough to form a perfect picture, nay more, enough to bring up before us a living reality, the study of which will occupy us all our lives, will occupy all men all their lives, and even at the end the mine will not be exhausted.

Let us but look for Him there, allowing other books to help us as they may, but not making them our final source, and we shall find Him for ourselves. We shall find this Man, Jesus, stamped from the beginning with a strange directness and clarity of vision, which nothing can ever divert, or draw aside, or make to falter; He could meet His mother's tears with a direct reply: "Did you not know

that I must be about my Father's business?" the remonstrance of John the Baptist, the first of saints, with the check: "Suffer it to be so; for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice"; to the end there is never any confusion, any doubtful understanding; He walks through life and death knowing always what would be.

We shall find Him next, as a natural concomitant to this, always clear, and firm, and decisive in his judgements, speaking always "as one having authority," always so that His enemies were forced to exclaim: "Never has any man spoken as this man speaks"; unhesitating, true, no matter what the circumstances against Him, no matter how men heckled Him, how they tried "to catch him in his speech," no matter what tact He was at times compelled to employ.

We shall find Him unerring in His estimates of men; He is never deceived or drawn away by a surface impression, never yields unduly, or against His better judgement, to occasion, never confounds evil with misfortune; but distinguishes truth from falsehood, real evil from real good, the canker at the root of human life from the mere withered branches, the "things that are for the real peace" of

men as opposed to make-believe forms; He discriminates between reality and truth in all alike, whether in the heart of a disciple or in that of an enemy, in the saint or in the sinner, in the believer or the pagan, the conventionally good, those who pass muster among men, or the outcast criminal.

This stamp of utter, unerring certainty, and of absolute trustworthiness because of certainty, is the first trait we discover. Alongside of this we shall find Him the tenderest of hearts, a father, a mother, a brother, a sister, a true and not a patronising or condescending friend, the exact equal of each and all, with an individual understanding and sympathy for every heart that opens out before Him, yet never does He confuse one with another, never does He weary of one in preference for another, much less exclude one for the sake of another, never is the love or interest of anyone diminished because He has love for so many. On the other hand, never is He weak, or over-indulgent, or soft, or too blinded by affection to see the evil or the limitations of His beloved. He gives love lavishly and to all who will have it, even the most debarred from human love, yet none would call Him languid

or sentimental; He wins love from those who are conquered by His presence, because He is so true, so strong, so selfless in purpose, so single-minded, so unable to deceive. Men might call Him by bad names; they might accuse Him of other evil deeds; they might say that He worked by Beelzebub, that He was possessed, that He was an impostor, that He blasphemed; they could never say, though He loved so much and showed it, though His love went out to the most loathsome and abhorred so that some took scandal, that this His love was ever other than understanding, and true, and generous, and enduring, and uplifting, and in itself perfect.

Again, we shall find Him ever constant. He has a definite work to do, a definite life to live and death to die—that is written on every page of the record, in His journeys, in His teaching, in His attitude to men, as much as it is constantly and repeatedly expressed in His words—and never for a moment does He swerve in its accomplishment. Failure may depress Him, but He does not despond; opposition may alter His plan, but it does not slacken His effort; malice does not embitter Him; deceit, false-

hood, trickery, deliberate misconstruction of His words or actions, desertion, treacherous friends, faithless or weak-kneed companions, fruitlessness of all He may do, even deliberate rejection—none of these things can lessen His endeavour, make His hand tremble, or the feet on the mountains falter. None of these things can alter Him; always and everywhere, from beginning to end, He is the same; He seems to give no thought to consequences, or fruits, or reward; whatever the results, he has a work to do, and the doing of the work is all that He considers; He labours, not looking for reward; toils, not demanding rest; steadily He walks through life to His goal, "giving testimony of the truth," "speaking as one having authority," always "going about doing good," to all alike, deserving and undeserving, friend and enemy, alien and ally, who will deign to accept from Him the blessing He strews along His path as He goes.

With these three, His absolute truth of understanding, His boundless, tender heart, His constancy in action, we shall find Him, as a necessary consequence, looking out on men with infinitely tender eyes. Never a human being comes within His horizon, but He looks through it with the eyes, of accurate

judgement it may be, but indefinitely tempered by love; with intimate understanding He interprets it, with the welcome of friendship He receives it; there is not a good thought thinkable about it, not a good interpretation possible to put upon its wayward deeds, but that thought and that interpretation will have found a place in His mind. While others find reason justly to condemn, He will find reason to save; while justice puts a limit to the time of repentance, and permits the law to run its course, He will wait till the very last moment, and in the end will rescue. He does not compel men; He has too much regard for them to drive. He offers them Himself and awaits the issue; when they look wistfully He invites them to draw near; once or twice only does He make the first step, usually He leaves that to them; but when they do come near, when they do let Him see that they want Him, then His eyes glisten, and His heart expands, and His hand opens, and there is interest, and sympathy and longing in every look and gesture; He was never so near seeming foolish, as when some pleading soul showed that it believed and responded, and the key was thus applied to the flood-gates of His bursting affection.

These are four main lines that go behind the portrait of Him "that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength," as the four Gospels consistently describe Him. This is He who, when the Evangelist himself endeavours to depict Him in the abstract, can only be summed up in the words of the Prophet: "The bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not extinguish"; yet whom that same Prophet also called "Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace." We see Him clearly enough before us, and we know we are not mistaken; this Man of firm, unflinching manner, yet with not a shadow of hardness; grave in His looks, inspiring silence, yet with it something that attracts; an eye that looks out to long distances, yet not a soul feels itself passed over; glistening as through tears, yet strong as the eye of an eagle; a lip that trembles as the lip of a quivering maiden, yet so firm set that the weakest has courage from its strength. We see Him wrapt in deep thought, speaking words that set the wisest pondering, yet withal in such simplicity that the children

understand Him; looking out beyond the limit of life, yet not a flower in the field, or a bird of the air, or an outcast cripple on the roadside is forgotten; with a toiler's hand, and brain, and heart, and ambition consumed with eagerness for labour, yet ever ready to yield up His task when His companionship is needed; consumed with zeal for His Father's house, with zeal for truth and justice, yet patient and pitiful even as He smites, gentle as the gentlest mother.

All this we see and much more: the love of loneliness, though "his delights are to be with the children of men"; the love of prayer, though He cannot tear Himself from the crowd, not even to take food; the love of peace, though His days are one long warfare; the love, seen in His every outside behaviour, to be one with all men, though He could not keep from them that which prompted them to make Him their king. But it is useless to carry on the portrayal; we go on and on, the fascination grows, at each new step we see more and more, for He is utterly transparent; and yet at every point at which we stop we feel that we have said nothing. The Evangelists knew Him better than we, and they did not venture to describe Him. They

were content to let Him walk through their narrative, preaching the Kingdom, healing the sick, having compassion on the multitude, or retiring into the mountain to pray, knowing well that in so doing He would not be lost amid the details; His personality would be too great for that; they knew they would, in their simple story of simple fact, leave behind them that on which all generations would ponder, yet which they would never exhaust.

And indeed it is so. The more we contemplate it, look at it with believing eyes, warmed by love, stirred by hope and trust, the more vivid does the portait grow, the more living are the features. They are, we know them; "we have found him whom our soul loveth, we have held him and will not let him go." Other portraits help, copies, facsimiles, drawn by more recent artists; but all these have their limitations, some have their exaggerations, none are exactly accurate; all have what life they possess from the great original, and only in so far as they reproduce its fire have they any inspiration in themselves.

II

This is some little shadow of Jesus as the Gospels show Him to us; more if we like, and, above all, more of the details, we can gather for ourselves. These are four guiding lines; we can easily cluster much else around them. For He is not difficult to discover; He needs no great effort of psychology or analysis; He is Himself just simple and true, just meek and humble of heart, and by truth and simplicity, by humility and meekness, He is best to be found; let us not forget His own prayer of thanksgiving wrung from Him at a moment when the learned turned away in scorn: "Heavenly Father, I give thee thanks that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones." Nor again His other words of warning: "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of God."

It is worth our while to weigh the meaning of these words. We complain of our want of fruit in prayer; of its dryness, its emptiness; often we only mean, but we do not know it,

that we are looking for fruit, not of prayer, but of study; we are watching for that reflex knowledge that comes of thought and study, not for that deeper insight, that fuller understanding, that realisation which is found in faith and love and hope, which is the real fruit of prayer, and which can no more be weighed and measured than life itself can be weighed in pounds or measured by yards. In other words, we judge by the standards of poor grown-up people, and not by the unerring standard of a child. A child needs but its mother's company to know her, to love her, and to trust her, yet its knowledge, and love, and trust are not less true, or less complete, or less admirable on that account. And in precisely the same way there is a knowledge of Our Lord which no books or pondering can give us; which can be gained only by living in His company; by living in His company as He glides through the pages of the Gospels; as he plies His daily trade at Nazareth, quiet, monotonous, till we become almost forgetful of His presence; or creeps away in silence up the mountain-side, till that, too, becomes a habit with us; or walks by the riverside, unnoticed in the crowd, except by one who alone has eyes to see—

how strange that those who fail to see Him claim this as proof of their superior knowledge!—or stands firm and frank before the people, now appealing, now commanding, now consoling, now rebuking, but always the same strong pillar on which all may lean; or sits at table, now with friends, now with enemies, familiarly treated, yet always reverenced, contemned by some, yet feared by others, held in awe, yet never losing that which is expressed in the phrase "only Jesus"; or sleeps in the boat, feeble, yet almighty; or compassionates by lowering Himself to the lowest, yet in such a way that because of it men would hail Him as their king; or denounces evil with a thunder that cows the most violent, yet all the while infants clamber on His knee—living with Him in the midst of all this, in busy streets or along lonely byways, in public Jerusalem or in the privacy of Bethany, we come to know Him as He is for ourselves, and we know that we know Him, whatever those who know Him not may say, and even though we have not, nor care to have, a single word with which to express it. "It is the Lord!" "I to my beloved and my beloved to me." "I know in whom I have believed." That is enough.

My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Wonder of the world, most beautiful among the sons of men, before whom Thy very enemies bow down, acknowledging the marvel of Thy countenance, the perfection of Thy character, the invincible attraction of Thy whole self, how strange a thing it is that there can be those who pass Thee by unnoticed, how stranger still that even we can pass Thee by! Yet is it even so. We believe, we are certain, we know; we build our life here, and our hope hereafter, on Thee and Thy claim; we own Thee, not only to be perfect Man, but to be very God of very God; we see in Thee alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the climax of all for which this world was made, the source from which flows whatever of good this world contains; we can see all this, and know it to be true, and in our moments of emotion can think we would gladly give our lives to witness to its truth; and yet the next minute we can ignore Thee; we can go counter to Thee; we can go our way through life as if Thou hadst never been.

More than this. We who have the light can reach behind the simple story of the Gospels; with Thy Apostle St. Paul to guide us we can understand in part what Thy

Resurrection signified; that "having once risen thou diest now no more, death can no more have dominion over thee"; that therefore Thou art living now as Thou wast living then, the same Jesus now as then, the same utter truth, the same fascination, the same understanding sympathy, the same beating heart: "Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever." We can realise all this, understand it sufficiently to know that it is true; we can accept the fact of Thy being, and of Thy nearness to us here and now; and yet we can think, and act, and build up our lives as if it were not or as if to us it meant nothing. We can, with eyes of faith, see Thy face glowing in the darkness; with consciousness of hope we can feel Thy hands stretched out to us to seize our own; with the instinct of love we can distinguish the very accent of Thy voice, even as did Thy fellow-countrymen of Galilee, calling to us, whispering our very names, telling us of love that human words cannot express—all this is ours, and by its very clearness we know it to be true; it is no fancy, it is the offshoot of no mere sentiment; and yet withal we can turn away, our vision obscured by the fascination of a trifle; and we can act as if

we preferred to walk with Thee no more, as if we had never learnt to "taste and see how sweet is the Lord!"

Nay, there is something more. We can hear Thee, in words that true hearing cannot misunderstand, giving Thyself to us to be our slave, to be our food, our life, our abiding companion; yet we can still remain unmoved. One or two among men in the ages past we can see who have learnt Thee, and, once they have learnt, have counted all else but refuse in comparison; who have loved Thee, and, once they have begun to love, have known for certain that no other love could draw them away, with this no other love could compare; who have given themselves to Thee, and, once they have made the surrender, have then proved what heroism, what a true man's strength can accomplish—the strength that conquers torture, that makes a toy of death; the strength that magically turns everything to gladness. We can all see this; we can admire and approve; we can say that here is a man at his best, because he has found the true goal of his being, has become infused with the very life of life, has attained to that likeness to Jesus which is man's ideal —all this we can see, and can say, and then

can turn about upon our heel and go our way, as if for us these things had no meaning.

Truly, what a strange thing is man! Whether it be the man who believes, yet is not subdued, or the man who will not believe, as if to believe so grand and great a truth were in some way demeaning to himself. Demeaning to acknowledge Jesus Christ! Demeaning to own Him for my Brother, whose kinship makes me royal! To call Him my friend, whose great heart expands mine beyond the limits of the world! To take Him for my companion, whose comradeship gives life a new meaning! To accept Him for my Leader, whose service is a hall-mark of nobility! To set Him up for my Ideal than which neither God nor man could make anything more grand! Demeaning to be won by Jesus Christ! If man thinks so, or if in his meanness he acts so, can he be worth so great a gift? Can he be worth the offering of the life, the outpouring of the blood, of Jesus?

Yes; even to this Christ says, "Yes"; and it is a last disclosure of His character, the crowning feature of all, a revelation which breaks down the heart of St. Paul, and would

break down the heart of every man who would let himself be penetrated by it. "Christ loved me, even me, and gave himself for me, even for me."

III

When I was younger, a novice in religion, and knew myself less, and knew others less, and was full of high ambitions in the spiritual life, and sought in books and in study, in thought-out plans and schemes on paper for guides to the summit of perfection, I set virtues before me, and meditated on their beauty, and proposed to myself to acquire them, sub-dividing them, analysing them, arranging their degrees as the steps of a ladder. This week, as the good spiritual writers bade me, I would acquire the virtue of patience; next week it should be a carefully guarded tongue; the week after should be given to charity; then should come the spirit of prayer; and in a month or two, perhaps, I might have an ecstasy and "see the Lord." But now, when I have grown older, and find myself still struggling for the first of these virtues, and that in a very elementary degree,

and have been taught quite other lessons than I dreamt of, in part by the sorry disappointments in my own soul, in part by the progress seen in the souls of others, I am convinced that there is one road to perfection better than all else—in fact, that if we neglect this one no other will be of much avail. After all, it is possible to acquire perfection in virtues, and yet to be far from a saint; few men have made better use of the particular examination of conscience, for the acquiring of natural virtues, than a certain well-known atheist, and yet to the end he remained without a spark of religion in him. On the other hand, it is possible to be a great saint, and yet to be imperfect in many respects: ask the saints themselves and they will all tell you of their many failures and shortcomings. But one thing is not possible; it is not possible to grow in the knowledge, and love, and imitation of Jesus Christ, without at the same time growing in the perfection of every virtue and becoming more a saint every day.

This, then, if I were allowed to begin my spiritual life over again, is the line along which I would try to live it; and is the line along which I would try to lead the lives of any whom God gave into my care. Particular

virtues are good things—of course they are; it is much to be always patient, to be diligent in the use of our time, to be considerate with those who try us, to keep our tongue in control; nevertheless, "Do not the heathens this?" And is it not possible to possess all these, and yet, on their very account, to remain as proud as Lucifer? I would go further and say that the devil himself must possess many of these virtues; he can certainly bide his time, he can be very busy, he can speak honeyed words, he can accommodate himself to everybody's needs, he can be the most attractive of companions. But these things are not the main issue; they are often no more than the paint on the surface; and truth, sanctity, only begins when the core of the creature is affected. And this is done, almost alone, by love; when the creature loves, then it is changed, and till then scarcely at all. Thus it is that the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ goes deeper down than any Stoic striving after virtue; it is flesh and blood where the other is but bleached bones; it gives life and substance where the other is only dead perfection; the imitation of Jesus Christ includes every virtue, makes them unconsciously our own, produces them from

itself, and does not merely put them on from without, even as the brown earth gives forth the beauty of spring flowers and does not know it.

Hence, in practice, were I to be asked for an application of all that I have been here pleading for, I would say:

1. Read spiritual books, yes, as much of them and as many as may be convenient; but do not measure growth in the spiritual life by the number of books you have read; do not even measure it by the amount of learning they give us. Remember the warning of St. Ignatius: "It is not abundance of knowledge that satisfies the soul, but to feel and to relish things with the inner man." Read to provide material for this inward perception and relish; but do not count it necessarily loss that there are books we have not read, or authors of whom we know nothing. And, above all, read the Scriptures, especially the Gospels, with an eye less upon ourselves, and more upon Him whom they describe; in that, more than in any other reading, shall we find that knowledge and true spirituality grow together.

2. Hold spiritual conferences, yes, but less about ourselves and our own despicable

faults, or even our little virtues and ideals; more, far more, about Him and His superb perfection, forgetting ourselves in the glory of His sunshine. By so doing it is true we may lose the satisfaction of watching ourselves grow in holiness—that is dangerous satisfaction at the best—but instead we shall grow the more naturally and fully, and He will know it, and that is enough.

3. Make meditation, yes; pray, yes; give the thirsting soul as much of this as it can take. But do not spend all the time lamenting our own littleness and our own shortcomings, patching up our petty, threadbare resolutions and will-o'-the-wisp ideals which, experience has taught us, are only set up that they may topple down again each day. Instead fill the hours of prayer with His absorbing presence, with His invigorating company, the loving admiration of this Beautiful of the sons of men, the joy of His friendship, the interpretation of His mind, sympathy with the gladness and sorrows of His heart. Fill our prayer with these things, creep through His wounds into His very soul, thence look out through His eyes upon heaven and earth, and our little selves prone at His feet, and though by the process we

may forget our own spiritual ambitions, we shall instead unconsciously become what He was.

4. Examine our consciences, yes; but do not turn it into an everlasting pecking at the soul, ceaseless beating of this poor creature, which time has long since shown us comes to little good. Instead, let the eyes of Jesus look at us, let us see ourselves through those eyes, the joy we are to Him for our encouragement, the sorrow for our trusting contrition, the smile on His face or the wistful look of disappointment at the sight of us; and it will be strange if the constant sight of Him does not produce its lasting effect.

IV

There remains one more point on which human nature will ask to be assured. We may accept that growth in the knowledge, and love, and imitation of Jesus Christ is the all-important matter in our spiritual lives; we may also have grasped in some way how it may best be obtained; but human nature is tempted to ask a further question, and that is: Can we know, for certain, and if so, how

can we know, that we have attained it? There are many tests of love, some true, many false; some good as far as they go, but inadequate; others indications only of temporary feeling; the signs of perfect love are usually far removed from these, usually devoid of all sentiment.

We may see this in ordinary life. A sign of understanding and love between two friends is a certain agreement, a sympathy of mind. They see things the same way, they look to the same ends, they share each other's knowledge and views in order that they may think together; almost unconsciously their minds harmonise, become alike, and this is the best sign of all. So it is between the lover of Christ and His beloved. They see more and more alike as they come into communion, along the same perspective, towards the same goal; the interpretation of life given by the one becomes that accepted by the other. The sinner first sees his own sinfulness in all its hideous degradation; gradually he sees it with the eyes of Jesus Christ, and in that light it shows itself infinitely worse; soon those very eyes tone the horrid picture, for there come the tears of pity and mercy; self-hate softens to self-humilia-

tion, self-humiliation to appeal—and the soul that before only knew itself unfit for any consideration, seeing itself as its Lover sees it, finds in its very unfitness a reason to cling, and to hope, and to love, and even to rejoice all the more.

Then with those same eyes it looks down the lane of life, and finds new ideals for which to live. What are those ideals? They are not far to seek, for He has fixed them as He walked before us. "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." "He that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." "My food is to do the will of him that sent me." "I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me." "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." "I have done the work thou gavest me to do." "Father, not my will, but thine be done." So in many places does the mighty Lover of mankind give to His beloved men the key to the problem of life. "In the head of the book it is written

of me, that I should do thy will, O my God."

In like manner the true lover of Our Lord finds himself, without any conscious effort, without even making of this a special virtue, simply, instinctively, because his heart beats in harmony with the heart of his Beloved, seeing ever more and more the will of God in all the circumstances of life, making this his one aim, longing for this as the cure of the ills of men, finding in its fulfilment his chief satisfaction. The man in whom the will of God becomes ever more his dominant ideal, the thing that is above all for his peace, may assure himself, whatever he may feel, however little display of love he may show, that his love of Jesus Christ, nevertheless, is real and fruitful and growing.

Again, we notice in those who truly love one another a tendency to become, not only of one mind, but also of one heart. Not only do they think and interpret alike, work towards the same ideals, and use the same means, but where the heart of one goes out, there the other's heart will tend to follow. Love loves what its beloved loves, and because its beloved loves it; once it knows, it asks no further questions, or, if it does, they are

only to discover ever more motives for love.

If, then, our knowledge and love of Jesus Christ Our Lord are true, we shall find ourselves feeling what He feels, and as He feels it, suffering as He suffers, and for the same reasons bright when He is bright, and because we know there is gladness sparkling in His eyes, pouring out our love where He pours it out, and in the way that He bestows it. And, indeed, this is the one and only test that He Himself gives of true knowledge and love of Himself. "If you love me," He says, "keep my commandments." "If any man love me, he will keep my word." And what is His commandment? What is His word? He leaves not a shadow of doubt. "This is my commandment, that you love one another." "A new commandment I give to you, that you have love one for another." "In this shall men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."

Here, then, is our second test, utterly infallible; if we are really growing in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, we shall inevitably be growing in the understanding and love of others. "Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to me." It is good

to aim at charity, for its own sake, to practise it as a discipline upon ourselves, to set it as our standard of good breeding and behaviour, to take it as a hall-mark of education, a proof of a broad mind, a test of a kindly nature, even a definite spiritual ideal in itself. But there is a "yet more excellent way" than any of these, and that is growth in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. Nay, more; in comparison with this, the virtue acquired by this discipline and training and conscious effort scarcely deserves the name of charity. For charity is love, and love abides and comes from within; it is founded in the heart and expands itself outward; it is not put on as a garment; it is therefore an effect more of the training of the heart than of any external discipline. The man who really learns to love will do acts of love; it is not always true that the man who learns to do acts of love really cares, and therein lies the danger of acquiring charity by practice. But charity acquired through love of Jesus Christ is free from all such falsehood; it begins from within; usually at first, like a spring blade breaking through the ground, it gives little sign of its true nature; it lives in lowliness, bides its time, shows its charity chiefly

by patience and endurance, by humble submission and service; meanwhile it attunes itself to Him, learns to love as He loves, for the reasons that He loves, in the way that He loves; and when the day comes for sacrifice such love will not be found wanting.

There is yet a third test, which includes and goes beyond the two just given, and which in regard to our study of ourselves may be of less concern, though it matters very much in reality. "Love makes like." Those who love one another unconsciously grow in likeness to one another; in manner, in habit, in expression, in the turn of the foot or the play of the hand, even it may be in features the resemblance tends to develop. I know a religious Order whose nuns have, almost all of them, a little mannerism in their walk; were I taken into one of their convents blindfold, and one or two of the sisters were to pass by, I am sure I should be able to detect where I was. I believe these nuns have got their little manner from their sainted Mother Foundress; she has built her Order on love, and therefore the resemblance.

So, then, will it be between the lover of Christ and the Beloved. The mere intercourse has its silent effect; the manner of

Christ is instinctively caught, the portrait is reproduced, the character is expressed; there is the same intentness of gaze, the same gentleness of hand, the same ease combined with energy in the whole bearing of the body; the thoughts, words, actions of Christ find an echo in him who loves; gradually he lives —no, not he, but Christ lives in him. Thus does he "put on Jesus Christ"; and when he has done that it is everything. He will need no other teacher; he will possess the virtues he lacked; prayer will be spontaneous, and will solve its problem for itself; he will speak, when the time calls for it, "as one having power"; he will "go about doing good"; he will suffer, perhaps, "even unto death," but his "sorrow will be turned into joy"; for in him will be accomplished the wish of his Beloved: "that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled."

BY ARCHBISHOP GOODIER, S.J.

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